

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

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Office of the Secretary

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The Honorable Linda Morgan
Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street, NW, Suite 820
Washington, DC 20423

Ex Parte No. 582, *Public Views on Major Rail Consolidations*

Dear Chairman Morgan,

As Members of the Illinois Delegation and of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, we are writing to applaud the Board for holding public hearings on major railroad consolidations and the present and future structure of the rail industry. We understand the need for a broad look at the issues raised by consolidations. We also applaud you for your decision to conduct this examination separately from your review of the BNSF/CN combination application.

We, of course, are well aware of the implementation problems that have resulted from some recent railroad consolidations. However, neither the Board nor the process used to review these consolidations is to be faulted. Indeed, the Board has been very deliberative in your decision-making and the process overall has worked well. We are concerned, however, that some parties will seek to use the Ex Parte No. 582 hearings as an excuse or means to delay or otherwise impede consideration of the BNSF/CN application. We believe strongly that the applicants should not be penalized for service problems created by other railroads in implementing their recent mergers. Clearly, they are entitled to have their application judged on its merits and to have a timely decision based on established standards and evidentiary criteria that the Board had developed.

We appreciate your consideration of our views and look forward to working with you on this and other matters.

Sincerely

The Honorable William Lipinski
Member of Congress

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Member of Congress

The Honorable Jerry Costello
Member of Congress

Cc: The Honorable William Clyburn
The Honorable Wayne Burkes
The Honorable Bud Shuster